

# "The Government Never Quits," Says Chief Flynn

**Uncle Sam's Detectives Trace Out Crimes Irrespective of Time, Cost or Character, and Often, by Vigilance, Forestall Plots**

By RALPH TAYLOR.

WHEN Chief William J. Flynn of the Department of Justice remarked recently "The Government never quits," he uttered a truth that has been written over and over again in official records. For more vigilant than Argus, far-reaching as the Jovian thunderbolts and relentless as Nemesis have been those branches of our Federal service which in the past have acted as the Government's first line of defence in times of peace and war; the guardians of our rights and liberties and enforcers of our Federal statutes.

They have many difficulties to contend with; these untiring agents of the Department of Justice, the secret service and other governmental detective forces, and they claim no superhuman powers such as many of the sleuths of fiction would seem to possess, but the record that they have made in the past bodes anything but good for the persons responsible for the recent Wall street horror and other acts of violence that have shocked the patriotic citizenry.

Let the perpetrators of these crimes hide themselves to the far corners of the earth and there seek, under assumed names, to live out the rest of their lives free from all suspicion. But let them also bear in mind that others have tried this before and have thought themselves secure, only to have their fate overtake them, and to have these agencies, sometimes after years of vigilant pursuit, seize upon them and drag them back to the altar of justice, there to receive fitting punishment.

## Only Two Unsolved Mysteries.

Many a time it has looked as if our most efficient Federal sleuths were completely baffled, and as months and years passed without a single arrest for some particular crime of an exceptionally sensational nature there has been criticism and complaint over their apparent failure. Nevertheless when the writer of this article asked Chief Flynn a few days ago how many unsolved mysteries he could recall as having come to his official attention during his twenty years of service with the United States Secret Service the Chief replied:

"I can recall but two. I do not believe that there were any more in all of that time. Many cases took a long time to solve, but they were solved eventually and the guilty parties punished, but I am quite sure that there were only two in which the guilty parties were never captured. The reason why we were never able to get them I do not know, but it is quite possible that they were murdered or died of natural causes."

The bomb outrages and other plots of violence against the Government of the United States with which these investigators have to concern themselves are of comparatively recent date, so it is impossible to draw from them any illustrations of the dogged persistence with which the Federal agents follow their quarry.

The most important cases which the Government officials have been obliged to cope with in years gone by have probably been related to counterfeiting plots, and in many of these the work of bagging the offenders has been a matter of years, but has terminated with complete success for the Federal agents, so there is very good reason to believe that the years that lie before us will see the complete solution of those mysteries which at the present time appear to baffle the trained minds that are working to solve them. It is quite certain that these cases will never be marked closed and fled away as long as the heads of the Government agencies have reason to believe that one or more of the guilty parties is at large.

## The Barrel Murder Case.

The roundup of the "barrel murder gang" of counterfeiters by Chief Flynn after seven years of perilous investigation was but an instance, for there have been innumerable cases in which the Government investigators have done equally efficient work, and in which their determination has triumphed over every obstacle that chance or human cunning could place in their way. In some of these cases the offence committed was of a nature that might have been considered comparatively trivial, and there is a case on record where one of the Federal agencies arrested a man for defrauding the Government out of \$100 ten years after the offence was committed, for no crime against the Government of the United States is too large or too small for these operatives to give it their attention and their most earnest effort.

Had it not been for the secret service the police would not have known the identity of the slain Italian whom they found crammed into a barrel at Avenue D and Eleventh street on that April morning in 1903. But it happened that before the man's death Chief Flynn's operatives had him labelled as a counterfeiter, and one of them had worked into his confidence and into the confidence of his cutthroat comrades with a view to obtaining the concrete evidence that would be necessary to secure the conviction of the band in the Federal courts.

With the information that this secret service operative was able to give them it seemed certain that the entire gang of murderers would be taken down, but they set out to trail and keep track of the various members of the gang and watch for the moment when they should catch them red handed at their old tricks and land them behind the bars of the Federal penitentiary.

They were relieved of the necessity of arresting several members of the band by a relative of the murdered man, who had sworn a vendetta and who had shown a marvellous degree of efficiency in carrying it out, but when people had dismissed the barrel mystery from their minds or had become convinced that the perpetrators had made good their escape, in the winter of 1909-10, there was launched a series of raids in various parts of this city and the vicinity which netted what are generally believed to have been the remnant of the band, including the leaders.

This time the secret service agents had a perfect case against them for importing counterfeit \$2 and \$5 bills from Italy in olive oil cans and putting them into circulation in various parts of the metropolitan area. When Chief Flynn personally arrested Giuseppe Morello, one of the two leading spirits of the band, he found under the pillow of the man's bed, in which he was sleeping when the door of the room was forced open, a revolver loaded with buckshot, the only one of the kind that the Chief had ever seen.

Morello fainted when a sentence of twenty-five years in Atlanta Penitentiary was imposed upon him in the United States District Court here shortly afterward. Ignazio Lupo, known as "The Wolf," the other leader of the band, felt the hand of justice descend upon him in the form of a prison sentence of thirty years. Four of their followers were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment each, one to seventeen years and one to eighteen years, and so the Federal Government had disposed of as desperate a band of cutthroats as had ever disturbed the peace of the community and had struck terror to the Black Hand and counterfeiting groups throughout the entire country.

## John Schmitt's Downfall.

A good example of the manner in which the Government agents keep check on suspects may be found in the case of John Schmitt, alias "John Davis," who obtained immunity at the hands of the Scotland Yard officials for furnishing evidence against the other members of his band, and who was ousted from the British Empire with instructions to remain out for the remainder of his life.

Schmitt was too deep dyed a criminal to forsake his career altogether. He merely took a little vacation after his narrow escape in England, and finally came to this country with the idea of starting afresh along the same old lines.

With two men and one woman to help him he proceeded in the fall of 1908 to fit out a perfect counterfeiting plant in Revere, just outside of Boston. He had camera plates, acids and engraving tools shipped from New York to his new address, and was evidently counting upon doing a very profitable business without the slightest disturbance.

He began work upon the first lot of "queen" currency in the kitchen of his house late one night, but his feverish interest and the enthusiasm of his assistants were suddenly changed to terror when they heard a crash that could only mean that some one had broken down the front door. The assistants fled to the cellar and Schmitt bolted frantically from the room, only to be brought to an abrupt stop by something hard and cold that was pressed against his chest.

It was a revolver, and laughing over it was the face of Chief Flynn. "Why, John Davis," said the Chief, "aren't you ashamed of yourself?" A few minutes later the assistants were dragged from the cellar in handcuffs, and then a batch of very neat counterfeit ten dollar notes, the first and only fruits of Schmitt's American venture, was also dragged to view.

Schmitt was not successful in obtaining immunity this time. He went to Atlanta with a sentence of thirteen years nine months, and his companions accompanied him. Their terms expired some time ago, but if they are still alive it is quite certain that the secret service knows their whereabouts and also has a very good idea at the present time as to the manner in which each of them is behaving. And it is equally certain that the secret service will keep track of all of these persons throughout their lives.

One man who was arrested after a pursuit of six years was H. R. Wilken, counterfeiter

of upward of \$100,000 in spurious bills, who was seized in Santa Cruz, Cal., on October 29, 1916. This man had a method all his own and worked without confederates so that he had no fear of betrayal.

Recently a man was arrested in Texas who had been tracked for twelve years and in many countries in connection with a counterfeiting case.

Nor has this persistent effort been limited to the Federal agents of recent years. It is not a matter of administrations or of any particular operatives, but of departmental tradition which tells each and every man that enters the service to follow his trails to the end just as his predecessors have done.

Back in 1883, A. L. Drummond, who was one of Chief Flynn's predecessors, took up the trail of a desperate counterfeiting band in person and went so far as to get himself arrested and branded as a counterfeiter in order that he might learn the workings of the combination.

As Drummond related it in after years, Jim Hanford, one of the leaders of the gang, was in a cell in the jail at Holly Springs, Miss., when the local authorities brought in another prisoner who gave him the name as George Malm. The two men were handcuffed together when they were removed to the county jail at Oxford, Miss., by a colored deputy marshal, and Malm tried to bribe this guard to turn them both loose, but was not successful.

A few nights later, however, when the Sheriff and the United States Marshal were attending a dance, and the only guard at the jail was a negro deputy, Malm unfolded to Hanford a scheme for breaking jail, which the two men quickly carried out. Malm then led the way to a railroad yard, where they crawled aboard a freight train bound for St. Louis.

## A German Plot Foiled.

At St. Louis the men were arrested, but the police chief, after questioning each one privately, announced that he was satisfied with their innocence and turned them loose. They lost no time in getting out of the city.

It was then that Hanford asked Malm what his prospects were and extended to him an invitation to go to Cincinnati and join his gang, which Malm gladly accepted. Six months later the band was raided and every one having any connection with it was arrested excepting Malm. It was then that Hanford discovered that his fellow jail breaker was Chief Drummond of the United States Secret Service.

In the great mass of prosecutions and

internments which consumed the time of the Department of Justice and of the secret service in the days of the war there is no case that so well demonstrates the relentlessness of these agencies as the plot which was financed by Capt. Franz von Papen, Military Attaché to Ambassador von Bernstorff, for the destruction of the Welland Canal.

It was within a few weeks after the first shot of the war had been fired in 1914 that Capt. Alfred Fritzen, a former officer of the Kaiser's artillery and a reservist, journeyed from New York city to Buffalo with a large quantity of dynamite to blow up the canal which links Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

The plot failed largely because the men entrusted to carry it out did not have sufficient courage to do so, although they had all been supplied with automatic pistols to use against any one who might catch them in the act of dynamiting one of the locks or menace their escape. Each of these men

probably considered himself quite safe as months passed and the hand of the law failed to descend upon him.

But nearly two years later a Federal Grand Jury acting upon evidence gathered by the Department of Justice agents handed down a number of indictments naming each of the guilty men, and simultaneously all of these men save two were placed under arrest. One of those not arrested was Von Papen, whose official position on the German diplomatic staff had shielded him and who had been recalled by his Government. The other was Capt. Fritzen, whose whereabouts was a mystery.

The following winter a German of fine military bearing applied for work on a farm near Los Angeles, giving the name of Piper. This farm hand, who was Capt. Fritzen, had a merry time toiling in the sunshine and thinking about the way in which he had succeeded in outwitting the Government's sleuths. His employers showed him special

## Recent Bomb Plot Like One in History

THE explosion in Wall street is similar in many respects to one which took place nearly a century and a quarter ago in which the murder of Napoleon Bonaparte was planned. In both cases a horse and cart figure largely and the attack failed of its main object, but resulted in about the same number of deaths and injuries to innocent bystanders.

This parallel disaster occurred in Paris on December 24, 1890, when Napoleon was at the height of his power and had consequently won the enmity of many of the Royalist malcontents of that period, to whom his success spelled ruin.

Napoleon was at that time the First Consul. His carriage, in passing through a narrow street en route to the opera, encountered a one horse cart which blocked the way. Napoleon's coachman, Caesar, was in a reckless mood, having imbibed a trifle freely, so he whipped his horses to a gallop and the carriage, rocking and swaying, swept past the cart, just clearing it by a few inches and covering some distance in the sudden spurt. Barely had he done this when the cart exploded with a deafening noise which resounded for miles around and shook Paris to its foundations.

Napoleon escaped unhurt, though the windows of the carriage were shattered. But the explosion carried death to twenty-eight persons—eight of whom were killed outright,

while twenty died shortly afterward—and more than sixty persons were seriously injured. Houses were demolished for blocks around and the air was filled with shrieks and groans. All Paris was prostrated with grief and horror, and the resentment against the criminals grew to white heat.

The resemblance between these details and those of the Wall street tragedy is apparent. Wall street is noted for its narrowness. The buildings in the vicinity resembled those of a war torn town in France, and the scenes following the explosion were equally harrowing.

In the first instance, the infernal machine used consisted of a barrel of gunpowder, stuck round with grapeshot and pieces of old iron. This barrel was fastened under the cart and timed to explode by means of a slow match at just the moment when Napoleon was due to pass through the street. This calculation miscarried by a few seconds owing to the rapid pace at which the First Consul's vehicle had proceeded.

The recent explosion was also timed to occur when it would do the most harm to those at whose lives it was aimed, and the evidence points to the cause being a bomb. In view of the many pieces of old iron in the shape of window sashes which have been since found.

In the historic incident a young girl of only 15 years was hired to hold the horse which drew the cart to disarm suspicion.

**Famous Cases Recalled by Recent Bomb Explosion --- Tracing Counterfeiters and Guarding President, Bureau's Chief Duties**

consideration because they recognized in him a man of education quite uncommon in one of his occupation.

It was on March 9, 1917, that William M. Olney, then superintendent in charge of the New York offices of the Department of Justice, received a telegram informing him that one of his special agents had tracked down Fritzen and had him under arrest. On the day following our entrance into the world conflict Fritzen pleaded guilty to the plot and was sentenced to Atlanta penitentiary.

It is not the fault of the Department of Justice operatives that a jury chose to accept Capt. Hans Tauscher's story of his innocence of this plot, or that the diplomatic connections of certain men made it impossible to send them to prison. During those war days the Federal agents frequently found that after gathering their evidence they would be ordered by official Washington to refrain from acting lest some particularly delicate situation arise.

The real story behind the arrest in this city of Mme. Despina Davidovitch Storch, the Turkish spy, as the writer of this article heard it confidentially from one in high authority at the time of her arrest, was that she had succeeded in beguiling the Ambassador of a neutral power into acting as her unwitting aid.

As the Government official explained it with the injunction that it was not to be published at the time, this adventuresome had induced the neutral Ambassador to send certain letters abroad for her with his own official communications, and it was in this way that she got much of her information through the vigilant investigators and to other German agents in a neutral country.

The reason why the only charge formally made against this woman was one of "undesirability" was that official Washington wanted to avert a scandal which would seriously strain relations between this country and the one represented by the Ambassador involved in the case. Certain persons in Washington tried their best to belittle the case, but they failed to explain why the State Department had manifested such a great interest in it that officials here dared not make a move without permission from that department.

## Chief Flynn's Aids and Their Work.

Chief Flynn was transferred from the secret service to the position of chief of the bureau of investigation of the Department of Justice last year, and he has since surrounded himself with an exceptionally able and well trained force, including, in New York city, George F. Lamb, division superintendent, and Charles J. Scully, head of the "red squad." It is upon this force that the Government now depends for the suppression of plots against the national welfare, and it is to them that it looks for the ultimate apprehension of the persons responsible for the bomb outrages.

There are various other Federal departments which will cooperate whenever asked to do so, but they have distinct duties of their own. The secret service is charged with the duty of protecting the life of the President and hunting down counterfeiters. The post office inspectors are entrusted with the detection and capture of persons misusing the mails or stealing from them. The customs inspectors have their well defined duties, and the agents of internal revenue have done much to suppress traffic in narcotics and the manufacture of "moonshine" whiskey, although at the present time the work relating to the prohibition law is left principally to the special force created for its enforcement.

Persons who expect each and every crime to be solved within a few days or weeks have no understanding of the nature of the task that usually confronts the investigator. A quick solution is not evidence of superior detective work, but merely indicates that things happened to "break" favorably for the investigators at the start.

It is now thought probable that at least three of the men responsible for the bomb plots of last year are in Soviet Russia, having been deported from the transport Buford last December. A fourth man connected with these plots hurled himself to his death from a window of the Department of Justice offices early this year, but before he did so the Federal agents had wrung from him certain important information for which they had been searching vainly for many months.

What results this information will have the future must show, just as the past has shown the results of the relentless pursuit of innumerable other criminals, nearly all of whom sooner or later were landed behind the bars of some Federal prison.



WILLIAM J. FLYNN  
HEAD of THE  
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PLOTTERS ARROWS  
POINT TO SECRET SERVICE MEN  
GUARDING PRESIDENTS of the U S

